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The Woodland Period: 1000 B.C. to A.D. 1200 - 2014

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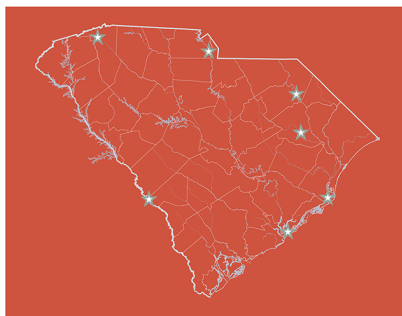
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pot·ter·y (pot'ə rē), *n.*

1. an artifact made from clay and hardened by heat.
2. a hallmark artifact of the Woodland Period, ca. 1000 B.C. to A.D. 1200.

Reconstructed Cape Fear Fabric Impressed pottery vessel from the Ashe Ferry site, 38YK533. Image courtesy of UNC-RLA/SCDOT.



The Woodland Period

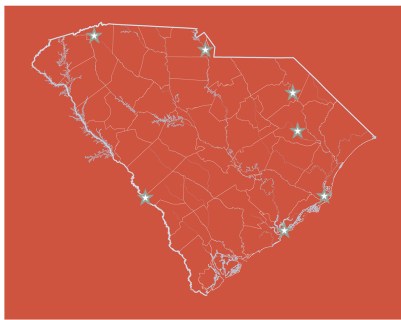
1000 B.C. to A.D. 1200



23RD ANNUAL SOUTH CAROLINA ARCHAEOLOGY MONTH

OCTOBER 2014

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Many important Woodland Period site excavations have taken place over the last fifty years in South Carolina. As the summaries here attest, much of this work would not have been possible without the selfless dedication of volunteers, the generous support of state agencies, such as SC DOT and SC DNR, the depth of expertise of the archaeologists, and a strong interest on the part of local citizens and descendant communities. It is through these partnerships and collaborations that we have come to understand a great deal about individual and community life, foodways, burial customs, pottery and stone tool crafts, and the like, culminating in a wealth of information about the period in South Carolina history from roughly 1000 B.C. to A.D. 1200, though questions remain. We hope these site vignettes inspire you to reach out for more answers and to look for ways to engage with archaeology and archaeologists in your part of the state, not just during Archaeology Month but throughout the year. And, as always, thank you for your support of South Carolina archaeology!

Pumpkin (38GR226)

Compiled from Charles (2001).¹

Information recovered from the Pumpkin site is among the best ever obtained from a middle Woodland period village in the South Carolina. Here, on a tributary of the Saluda River, archaeologists unearthed 504 prehistoric features, including pits, hearths, and postholes. Although—strangely—no chipped stone tools, mortars, gorgets, shell, mica, or bone tools were excavated from the features, archaeologists recovered over one thousand pottery sherds with plain, cord-impressed, brushed, simple-stamped and fabric-impressed surfaces. Both the pottery and radiocarbon dates provide evidence of a brief but intense occupation between A.D. 550 and 650 during a portion of the Connestee Phase (ca. A.D. 200 to 800).

The Pumpkin site stands out for its plant remains. Carbonized seeds commonly associated with Middle Woodland foodways in eastern North America, such as goosefoot, grape, maygrass, sunae, and honey locust, were recovered through a flotation process. A radiocarbon date of ca. A.D. 490 on goosefoot seeds (*Chenopodium berlandieri* spp. *jonesianum*) represents the first direct evidence for a domesticated native plant in South Carolina. The recovery of pepo gourd rind fragments (*Cucurbita*) is the first to be reported from the South Carolina Piedmont and the oldest known in the state's paleoethnobotanical record for *Cucurbita* pepo gourd.

Lewis-West (38AK228-W)

Contributed by Keith Stephenson and Karen Y. Smith, USC-SCIAA.

The G.S. Lewis-West site is a feature-rich middle Woodland period settlement located on the Savannah River on the upper Coastal Plain of South Carolina. Radiocarbon dates place the main occupation between 400 B.C. and A.D. 250 during the Deptford Phase (ca. 600 B.C. to A.D. 600). Like the other sites showcased here, G.S. Lewis-West is thought to be the location of repeated seasonal camping by game hunters and nut collectors. In addition to a wealth of pottery, charred food remains were abundant and well preserved.

G.S. Lewis-West is an important site also for its connections to the wider Woodland Period world. Evidence for broad connections is revealed in the presence of exotic goods from the coast and in Gulf Coast-like decorations on a number of vessels. Excavations further revealed three dog burials and semi-circular, pavilion-like structures, in addition to a wealth of ceramic and lithic artifacts. G.S. Lewis-West was strategically positioned at the nexus of two waterways, a major one to the coast and mountains and a minor one to the interior Piedmont to the northeast. Its location offered residents proximity to a variety of local resources with easy routes to people and resources farther afield.

Wando-Welch (38CH351)

Compiled from Marcoux and Poplin (2012).²

The Wando-Welch site is located on a small bluff above Hobcaw Creek near its confluence with the Wando River. Excavations by Brockington and Associates, Inc. in 2009 included 450 shovel tests, 41 m² of hand-excavated units, and the mechanical stripping of the upper 30 cm of topsoil from areas 310 m². In all, they identified nine discrete shell middens and nine refuse-filled pits, though no structures were located.

The Wando-Welch site pottery assemblage is dominated by the limestone-tempered Wando series. Within the Wando series, cord marked and plain wares occur most frequently accompanied by smaller quantities of simple-stamped, fabric-impressed, and check-stamped pottery. At least 55 vessels from the site were classed in the series. Simple bowls and jars are the only identified vessel forms. Wando limestone-tempered pottery occurs most frequently at sites north of the Cooper River in the Wando River Basin, where the series takes its name and where Wando occupations occurred during the Late Woodland period (ca. A.D. 1000-1200). Botanical remains are dominated by hickory nut with fruit and seed species that are limited to the fall, indicating settlement during that season. The assemblage suggest short-term occupations by small groups focused on exploiting shellfish and nuts.

Ashe Ferry (38YK533)

Compiled from Riggs and Davis (2014).³

The Ashe Ferry site, located on the Catawba River in northern South Carolina, was excavated by a team of archaeologists with the aim of recovering as much information as possible prior to the replacement of a 20th century bridge in 2010. The site, and the materials recovered from it, show it to be the location of repeated seasonal occupation by game hunters and nut collectors



Pit filled with Fire-Cracked Rock at Ashe Ferry

from about A.D. 950 to 1150 during the Ashe Ferry Phase. Direct evidence for acorn collecting and processing comes from the



Arrow Points from Ashe Ferry

recovery of abundant acorn residues. Indirect evidence, such as deep storage pits and an abundance of rocks split open by repeated heating and cooling (called fire-cracked rock), also supports the idea that collecting and processing were major site activities.

Stone projectile points and stone tools of other categories reflect the use of the site as a basecamp, from which hunting parties would traverse the South Carolina piedmont in search of wild game. Though animal remains were not well preserved, specialists were able to identify a range of freshwater and land fauna among the samples.

Minim Island (38GE46)

Compiled from Espenshade and Brockington (1989).⁴

Excavations at the Minim Island site in coastal Georgetown County revealed a Late Archaic and Early Woodland period shell midden. The earliest occupation is represented by a Thom's Creek/Refuge pottery assemblage consisting of Thom's Creek Plain, Incised, and Refuge Dentate Stamped all radiocarbon dated to ca. 1440 B.C. This initial settlement followed the development of a brackish water marsh in the area. Site occupation at this time occurred during the spring and summer with subsistence efforts focused

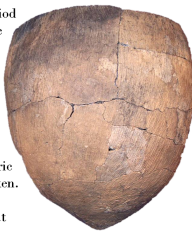
on estuarine fish and particularly sturgeon and gar. Oysters were gathered for food but apparently remained a minor contribution to the diet.

This was not the case with the subsequent Deptford occupation between 600 and 250 B.C. when the ceramics consisted mostly of Deptford Check Stamped. The presence of compact shell suggests a heavy reliance on oysters in the diet along with estuarine fish and mammals. Intensive oyster collecting along with hickory nut harvesting occurred during the fall. Fishing for sturgeon and gar was pursued in the spring and summer along with mammal and turtle hunting. During the cold weather of winter, it appears that the inhabitants migrated to the interior. In total, the evidence indicates seasonally permanent encampments of only a few families. Several post-Deptford occupations at Minim Island appear to be of short duration, probably due to a continuous rise in sea level through the early Woodland until the present, which would have adversely affected productive oyster beds and altered patterns of estuarine fish movement in the immediate vicinity of the site.

Kolb (38DA75)

Contributed by Chris Judge, USC-Lancaster.

A dense occupation during the Woodland period has been discovered at the Johannes Kolb site adjacent to the Great Pee Dee River near Mechanicsville in Darlington County. Archaeologists have suggested that the reduction in the overall size of projectile points found here is indicative of the introduction of the bow and arrow. Many different types of pottery vessels decorated with mainly punctuations, cord and fabric impressions were made used and broken.



Hanover Cord Marked Vessel from Kolb

Woodland people had a diet that included among other items deer, turkey, turtles, fish, freshwater mussels, acorn, hickory and walnuts, persimmons, grapes plus a small amount of cultigens, including maygrass, squash and corn towards the end of the period. Large, subterranean storage pits were dug deeply into the sandy onsite soils and a few were subsequently used as trash receptacles. Excavations, open to the public, are conducted here in March of each year.



Yadkin Storage Pit at Kolb

38FL425

Contributed by Sean Norris and Ramona Grunden, TRC.

In 2009, TRC survey archaeologists discovered numerous Woodland Period ceramics on a sandy terrace overlooking a tributary of the Lynches River in Florence County. Subsequent test excavations revealed a stratified occupation containing Late Archaic and primarily Woodland period artifacts. TRC conducted data recovery in 2013, in coordination with the South Carolina Department of Transportation, the Catawba Indian Nation Tribal Historic Office and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Over 11,000 artifacts were recovered from the site. Preliminary results indicate a significant Early Woodland, semi-permanent habitation.

Four cremated burials were identified as part of the Early Woodland component. Radiocarbon dates obtained from charcoal associated with the cremations indicates a date of 950 B.C. Evidence from the cremations indicates that the bone was defleshed prior to being burned indicating these were secondary burials. The Late Archaic and Early Woodland pottery types are represented by Stallings Fiber Tempered Plain, Thom's Creek Plain, and Refuge Dentate Stamped. Most of the pottery from the site dates to the later Woodland period and includes Deptford Check Stamped, Cape Fear Cord Marked, and Hanover Cord Marked and Fabric Impressed. These wares share a close affiliation with the other pottery types made throughout the Pee Dee River drainage. Typical forms of pottery manufactured at this site included bowls, platters, and large cooking or storage pots.

The 2014 South Carolina Archaeology Month poster was designed by Keith Stephenson and Karen Y. Smith of the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA). Posters are distributed by SCIAA with funding from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. The activity that is the subject of this poster has been funded, in part, with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, and administered by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendations by the Department of the Interior. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or handicap in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240. In addition to the above, the consultant agrees to comply with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, 42 U.S.C. § 6101 Et. Seq., which prohibits discrimination in hiring on the basis of age.

¹ Charles, Tammey (2001) "The Pumpkin Site: 38GR226. Archaeological Investigation of a Prehistoric Village in Northern Greenville County, South Carolina." South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology Research Manuscript Series 228.

² Marcoux, Jean Bernard and Eric C. Poplin (2012) "Defining Woodland" South Carolina. Antiquities 44:35-45.

³ Riggs, Brett H. and B. P. Stephen Davis, Jr. (2014) "Archaeology at Ashe Ferry: The Late Woodland in the Lower Catawba River Valley." University of North Carolina Research Laboratory of Archaeology Research Report No. 36.

⁴ Espenshade, Christopher T., and Paul Brockington, Jr. (1989) "An Archaeological Study of the Minim Island Site: Early Woodland Dynamics in Coastal South Carolina." Prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, D-40W-87-C-0005.